



WASHINGTON-PARKS ACADEMY

A Cornerstone School

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Location: 11685 Appleton, Redford Charter Twp, MI 48239

Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2026

5:00 pm

1) BUSINESS ROUTINE

a) Call to Order (President)

The meeting called to order at 5:01 p.m.

b) Board of Directors Roll Call

Present: Steve Londo, Marcia Kreger, John George

Absent: None

Attendees: Grant Heugel, Director of Operations; Elizabeth Noa Carrion, Compliance Director; Clint McDaniel, GVSU Representative; Taiwo Da-Silva, Superintendent; Doug Zloto, Chief Operating Officer; John Kava, Legal Counsel; Christina Gaines, K-5 Principal; T Clark Durant, Chief of Staff (virtual); Maggie Durant, Chief Strategy Officer; Dustin Quarrella; Mary Ann Johnson, Finance Director; Joe Valentic, Chief Financial Officer; Steven Katzman, UHY Auditor; Marlene Beach, UHY Auditor (virtual); Aquan Grant-Wayne, GVSU School Support Liaison (virtual)

c) Adoption of Agenda

Londo motioned to approve the agenda with action item 5b removed. Kreger moved. George seconded. All approved.

d) Approval of Previous Board Meeting Minutes

Londo motioned to approve the previous board meeting minutes. George moved. Kreger seconded. All approved.

e) Pledge of Allegiance

Board and attendees said the pledge of allegiance.

f) Sharing of Gratitude

Board and attendees expressed their gratitude's.

2) PUBLIC COMMENT (Limited to agenda items)

There was no public comment.

3) PRESENTATIONS

a) UHY Audit Presentation – Steven Katzman & Marlene Beach

1) Presentation of Fiscal 2025 Audit

The audit was submitted on time, and an unmodified opinion was issued on the financial statements. While the Academy was required to wait for updated state guidelines, which were released later than anticipated, management was prepared and submitted all required reports promptly upon their issuance. The auditor's evaluation of the Academy's going concern is as follows: as of June 30, 2025, the Academy reported a fund balance deficit of \$1,536,022. After reviewing management's plans, it was determined that substantial doubt regarding the Academy's ability to continue as a going concern has been alleviated. This determination is based on deferred inflows of State aid totaling \$2,194,567, which are expected to be released by the MDE and will result in a positive fund balance once received. Financial statement findings included material weaknesses which included unreconciled material account balances, an unassigned General Fund deficit of \$1,536,022 as of June 30, 2025, and inaccuracies in the initial Schedule of Federal Awards. The balance sheet also reflects deferred inflows totaling \$2,194,567.

No material weaknesses were noted related to Federal Awards. Management agreed with the findings and addressed each item through a corrective action plan.

b) Organizational Update - Taiwo Da-Silva

Academically, all schools have demonstrated improvement, with December assessment data showing positive growth compared to the Fall. In regard to enrollment, we plan to grow within our existing grade levels, and we will be adding a Pre-K program in the Fall 2026. From a financial and operational perspective, the required deadlines for the financial audit were met and progress is being made toward achieving sustainable and balanced budgets in a post-COVID funding environment.

c) Academic Update - Taiwo Da-Silva & Christina Gaines

In Reading the percentage of students performing at or above grade level increased from 10% to 18%. The percentage of students performing two or more grade levels below decreased from 55% to 45%, including a five-point reduction in students performing three or more grade levels below grade level, reflecting meaningful progress in reading performance.

In Math the percentage of students performing at or above grade level increased from 3% to 4%, indicating early progress. The percentage of students performing three or more grade levels below decreased from 36% to 32%. Growth was primarily reflected through movement into the one-grade-level-below category, representing an important step toward proficiency.

d) Enrollment Update - Dustin Quarella

At WPA the last three years has held steady in enrollment. WPA aims to increase enrollment by 35 students by Fall 2026. The Academy plans to add a Pre-K program in the fall, which is expected to support achievement of this growth target. Certification through LARA has been completed. The process to become GSRP certified is underway.

The addition of Pre-K is also anticipated to positively impact enrollment across other grade bands, as families often enroll siblings of Pre-K students. From a financial perspective, the cost of a Pre-K teacher is lower than that of a K-5 teacher, and each enrolled Pre-K student generates approximately \$12,222 in funding.

e) Finance Update – Mary Ann & Joe Valentic

Significant improvements have been made within the Finance Department, including the development of a detailed budget using the Sage tool that reflects seasonality and improves year-round tracking and forecasting. Consultants have been engaged during peak workload

- a) Approval of Amended Budget
- b) Approval of Deficit Elimination Plan
- c) Approval of updated Emergency Operations Plan
- d) Approval of 26-27 School Common Calendar
- e) Approval of Engagement Letter for Plante Moran
- f) Reappointment of Stephen Londo to serve an additional board term
- g) Approval to authorize CEG if required by MDE to submit a Deficit Elimination Plan consistent with the approved amended budget.

George moved to approve Action Items 5a, 5c, 5d, 5e, and 5f. Kreger seconded. All approved.

Londo moved to approve action item 5g. Kreger and George seconded. All approved.

6) CONSENT ITEMS

None

7) AUTHORIZER COMMENTS – McDaniel

Upcoming Virtual Board Trainings (4:00–5:00 p.m.)

- January 21: *School Performance by the Numbers*
- February 18: *March Dollars, Strong Scholars*
- March 2: *Legislative and Community Engagement*
- October 23: *School Budget and Finance: Asking the Right Questions*
- Trainings are available on the authorizer's website under the Board Leaders tab

Board Training Grant Eligibility

- Individual training participation (two board members, one hour) qualifies for \$5 per member in academic grant funding (up to \$10)
- Additional \$5 available through customized board training
- Virtual quorum is permitted for workshop-style trainings
- Exploration of joint or advanced board trainings across Cornerstone schools
- Management teams will be invited to participate to support implementation of training recommendations

Behavior Threat Assessment and Management Teams

- All Michigan public schools are required to identify a Behavior Threat Assessment and Management Team by October 1, 2026
- Schools should review statutory requirements to ensure compliance

periods to ensure timelines are met and to prevent delays. We have prepared an amendment to the budget earlier in the year to get a better understanding of where we are financially and have a better outlook for the future.

There have been ongoing discussions with MDE related to ESSER expenditures. Despite prior audit verification of allowable expenditures, MDE requested additional review. After further discussion, the parties agreed to an independent agreed-upon procedures engagement. A separate auditor (Plante Moran) will conduct limited testing of 25 expenditures for each of the three applicable years to verify documentation and compliance. Upon completion, a report will be issued. The engagement is expected to be completed within 90 days of initiation, with work anticipated to begin upon approval. Once the report is completed the funds that are being withheld should be released.

f) Operations Update – Grant Heugel

The Board received an update on emergency operating procedures previously presented at the prior board meeting for review and familiarity. At this meeting, an action item was presented for the Board to formally adopt the updated emergency operating procedures. The content remains substantially the same as previously reviewed, with minor updates including revisions to the organizational chart, additional procedures addressing special events and off-campus incidents, inclusion of a hazardous analysis summary, and minor formatting updates.

g) Compliance Update – Elizabeth Noa Carrion

At WPA submissions are 100% complete, 97% on time, with an accuracy rate of 85%. We are currently monitoring Section 25E claims for students who transfer into the district after the October count date and prior to the supplemental count date. To date, no claims have been reported.

We are preparing the required annual homeless education training for all employees, which will be distributed within the next week. Wayne RESA will assist with administering and tracking the training, providing weekly completion updates to support compliance with state requirements.

Additionally, there are preparations underway for the supplemental count day scheduled for February 11, including the associated spring collection and count day documentation required by Wayne RESA.

h) GVSU School Performance Report Review – Aquan Grant-Wayne

WPA's charter expires in 2028. The 2024–25 School Performance Report indicates that the Academy did not meet the standard for academic achievement on the M-STEP/PSAT assessments. The Academy did not meet the standard for academic growth in both ELA and Math.

In addition, the Academy did not meet expectations for compliance and financial reporting due to late submissions. The School Index Score is 34.27%, which does not exceed the required threshold of 35.3%. Assessment participation was reported at 100%, which exceeds the minimum threshold of 95%.

4) BOARD POLICY WORK

a) Board Meeting Dates for 2025-2026: All on Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.

1. March 17, 2026
2. May 19, 2026
3. June 23, 2026

5) ACTION ITEMS

- Authorizer will provide additional resources and guidance

Legislative Updates

- Legislation signed December 23:
 - High school students may opt out of the MSTEP Workforce Readiness Assessment beginning in the 2026–27 school year
 - MDE to develop an optional extracurricular firearm safety program for students in grades 6–12
- Boards encouraged to review laws and consider potential impacts

2026 Charter School Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey

- Survey window open through February 27
- Seventh year of the survey
- Participation goal: 70% of the authorizer portfolio
- Survey includes board members, school leaders, and management organization representatives
- Results used to improve authorizer support and partnership

Leadership Forum

- Mid-year, in-person leadership forum for principals
- Date: February 26
- Location: Detroit
- Time: 8:30–11:00 a.m.
- Opportunity for collaboration, sharing best practices, and problem-solving

GVSU Student Teacher Hosting Opportunity

- Schools may host Grand Valley State University teacher candidates for Fall 2026
- Purpose: address teacher shortages and build educator pipelines
- Mentor teacher requirements:
 - Appropriate certification and grade/endorsement alignment
 - Minimum of three years of successful teaching experience
 - Consistently effective or highly effective evaluations
 - Interest in serving as a mentor teacher
- Information shared within the network

Awards and Recognition

- Congratulations extended for receiving the Impact 30 Award
- Core Values Award
 - 2026 focus: *Inquiry*
 - Application deadline: March 27

8) ANNOUNCEMENTS

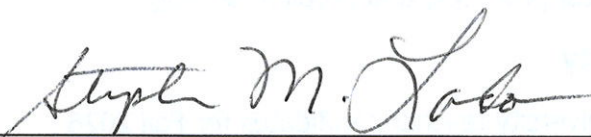
1. 1. Next Meeting: March 17, 2026

9) PUBLIC COMMENT (related to non-agenda items)

There was no public comment.

10) MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING

Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:11 p.m. by Londo. George moved, Kreger seconded. The above minutes were duly adopted on March 17th, 2026 by the Cornerstone Washington-Parks Academy Board of Directors at a properly noticed meeting held at which a quorum was present.



Submitted by Marcia Kreger, Vice President & Secretary

Steve Londo, President